

Research Article

## The Relationship Between Idiomatic Knowledge and Second language Proficiency/ Kurdistan Universities Undergraduates As An Example

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### ABSTRACT

Idioms are set of words whose meanings are not easy to understand or guess from the literal usual meaning of those words. The present study is an attempt to show the relationship between Idiomatic Knowledge and Second Language Proficiency of undergraduate students of English in some Kurdistan Region/ Iraq universities. The study has been carried out at English Departments of seven randomly selected Kurdistan universities using a quantitative method to highlight the level of the students in understanding idioms and the challenges or the difficulties they face in using them. Two tests have been adopted to get the data from the departments concerned after getting official permissions. Definitions by different linguists and dictionaries with classifications of idioms are provided. Then, some detected problems have been displayed and analyzed such as avoidance, competence and culture. Finally, the study has come up with some important conclusions and suggestions among which the existence and the nature of the relation between Idiomatic Knowledge and Second Language Proficiency.

### 1. Introduction

In fact, most people accept that by their nature, idioms are difficult to understand yet alone translate, much research has been carried out in the area. Research into second language ability and idioms exists aplenty but there is sparse research into the link between the two. Gibbes et al 1989 and Warren 2005 are examples of those who have looked at the area in passing. A more modern look was undertaken by Kyle Hugh Vanderniet of the BYU Department of English Language and Linguistics. It looked at students majoring in translation studies at Al-Zaytoonah University and the relationship between their second language proficiency and knowledge of idioms. It revealed that higher levels of idiomatic competency were expressed in speaking rather than in reading or writing; further, knowledge of idioms and greater second language proficiency were linked but it is difficult to discern. At Azad University, Beheshtirooi and Abdolshahnejad looked at 'Savushun' by Simin Daneshvar in respect of translation of cultural concepts and idioms involved when a novel originally written in Persian was translated into English, and the different types of strategies the translator used to do so.

### 2. Previous Studies

Cooper (2012), Irujo (1986a) and Liontas (2003) looked at what happens when idioms are taught to second language learners whereas Kellerman (1983) looked at how the first language is involved in the processing of second language idioms. On the other hand, Samani and Hashemian (2012) found that greater knowledge of the target language's society and culture obtained through the learning of idioms, which can also constitute the 'soul' of a language according to Elkilic (2008). According to Stight (1979) the correct use of idioms is fundamental to learning a second language.

Classification, grading and fixed characteristics in idiomatic syntax has been explored by many including Lennon (1998), Simpson and Mendis (2003), Grant and Bauer (2004) and Cooper (1999). Lennon (1998) focused on a continuous scale of idiomaticity whereas Zyzik (2011) mentioned fixed syntactic characteristics whereby co-occurrence of individual components

takes place and substitution is disallowed. It is also possible to categorize idioms by length (Makkai, 1972) or the scale of Non-literal meaning according to Fernando (1996).

It is really important to note that language teachers and translators must consider idioms of the utmost importance according to Fernando (1996) especially if natural type output is required. Native like fluency also happens more if idioms are used, as Tajali and Tehrani (2009, cited in Nattinger and De Carrico, 1992) see it.

Within the same effort, Crick, Pawley and Syder (1983) talk about the difference between second language learners learning words individually and those who learn chunks and phrases as a whole. Those who learn the larger chunks can more easily retrieve them from their memory and reduce processing time and effort. Therefore, learners should try to learn chunks because idiomatic expressions are found throughout everyday life and this includes the news or daily communication. It is therefore important for second language learners to learn idioms so that they sound more fluent and native like. According to Teaching Idiomatic Expressions (2015) nonnatives become closer to native proficiency through the use of idioms.

Rizq (2015) states that idiomatic expressions are very much culturally based. This means that a knowledge of the customs, heritage and history of native speakers is important. Similarly, those idioms which derive from physical action and experience are also similar. Such as mentioned about heat for example "to breathe fire". It means, according to Boers (2008) that a certain cross-cultural experience is relevant in learning some idioms because in human experience we all know about being sick or well and hot or cold, for example. On the contrary, different cultures have different experience in some domains so in English a lot of idioms come from sailing and naval warfare because England was historically a naval nation.

The present study sheds the light on a very important area of research that has not been given enough attention to, viz. the relationship between Idiomatic Knowledge and Second Language Proficiency and the nature of that relation.

### 3. Definitions of Idioms

Even now, there is no general consensus as to what exactly an idiom is. Nevertheless, some attempts of defining idioms will be given below.

To start with, linguists see idioms as being both manifestations of normal speech comprising part of a native speaker's linguistic repertoire and a fixed phrase, such as "To have several irons in the fire". Taken apart, this phrase would be almost meaningless, but as an idiom it has a very clear meaning.

According to Cruse (2011: 86), a compositional expression is one which can be broken down into its constituent parts. Because idioms are grammatically complex, we cannot predict the meaning from its components, which therefore makes them a kind of non-compositional phrase.

Fernando (1996:30) explains that idioms are fixed expressions, and it is not possible to substitute other words into them. The example is given of *grasp the nettle*. It is not correct English if we put *grab* in the place of *grasp* as it is a fixed expression. Thus, they are on the surface incoherent and must be considered in their entirety to make sense.

Different dictionaries have defined idioms in different ways but the general meaning is essentially the same. Several examples are given below.

The 'Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology' (1966) states that idioms are relevant to a particular language as they are derived from the associated culture and way of life and are thus institutionalized. It is this cultural specificity – be it related to a particular dialect of a language even – that causes such problems in translation and may even result in loss of meaning entirely. They are a specific way of expressing meaning according to a certain language, per 'The Universal Dictionary of the English Language' (1958).

According to the 'Cambridge Dictionary of Idioms' (2010) idioms occur in all languages and add colour to English, and as a result, learners who take time to get to grips with idioms will gain in fluency.

Crystal in his dictionary of linguistics and phonetics (2008: 236) believes that idioms can be seen from two points of view: semantically and syntactically. From the first, the sequence of words which makes up a single unit must be viewed as such because taken word by word, it is not possible to determine the meaning. From the second point of view, syntactic variability is not allowed whereas in other contexts it would be, for example we have *it's raining cats and dogs* but *it's raining dogs and cats* does not exist and is impossible.

#### 4. Idiomatic Classification of Idioms

Makkai (1972: cited in Fernando, 1996: 3-5) separates idioms into two parts namely idioms of decoding and idioms of encoding.

The first type sees constructional homonymity aligned with a parallel counterpart of literal meaning. By contrast, there is an absence of constructional homonymity with idioms of encoding for Fernando (1996: 42). Makkai goes on to present a typology of idioms of decoding including sememic and lexemic idioms.

Sememic idioms can be those such as: idioms of institutionalized understatement and hyperbole; proverbs; idioms of institutionalized politeness and familiar quotations. On the other hand, lexemic idioms may be taken as those such as: phrasal verbs; pseudo-idioms; tournures; phrasal compounds; irreversible binomials; and incorporating verbs. Fernando then divides idioms further into three types namely literal idioms, pure idioms and semi-idioms (1996: 35-37). Let us examine each below:

Literal idioms are less semantically complex than either pure or semi-idioms while remaining invariant and restrictedly variant. Invariant idioms include e.g. *on foot* and restrictedly variant idioms include e.g. *for example* and so on.

Pure idioms are essentially a non-literal and institutionalized multi-word expressions. This category can include pure idioms which are invariant and non-literal e.g. *the coast is clear*; and restrictedly variable idioms which are non-literal for example *pitter-patter*.

The last class, semi-idioms, contains one or more literal and non-literal component which must go together. Invariant semi-idioms can be for example those like *catch fire* while those of restricted variance can include those such as *good morning*.

As for Seidl and McMordie, there are seven kinds of idiom which are set out below.

- 1) Key words with idiomatic uses such as adverbs e.g. *bad news travels fast*, nouns e.g. *the baby blues* and others e.g. *all hours* (1978:14).
- 2) Idioms with nouns and adjectives are either noun phrases such as *food for thought* or adjective + noun e.g. *the eternal triangle* (1978: 58).
- 3) Idiomatic pairs are those combinations which include five main kinds namely pairs of adjectives e.g. *free and easy*; pairs of nouns e.g. *body and soul*; pairs of adverbs e.g. *in and out*; pairs of verbs e.g. *do or die* and identical pairs e.g. *over and over* (1978:79).
- 4) Idioms with prepositions such as *against the clock* (1978:86) and phrasal verbs such as *break up* (1978:101).
- 5) Verbal idioms, which are either verb plus noun e.g. *throw a party* or verb and prepositional phrase, such as *keep in touch* (1978:197).
- 6) Idioms in particular categories include Animals e.g. *a busy bee*, Colours e.g. *a black day*, and Parts of the Body e.g. *hands off* (1978:197).
- 7) Finally, idioms of comparison include examples like *eat like a horse* (1978:237)

#### 5. Idioms and Avoidance as a Learning Strategy

Irujo (1993) advised that exposure to idioms among second language learners should be as great as possible because most teachers agree that even advanced learners may not use them for fear of making mistakes, even though their use in normal conversation does not impede meaning. While using idioms is down to personal preference, it is also not the best way to evaluate a learner's ability simply by looking at how often and what range of idioms they use. Nevertheless, native like fluency is often perceived through greater use of idioms.

There are several studies which look at how learners avoid use of idioms as a strategy of learning for example Schrachter (1974), Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976) and Kleinmann (1977) but these are not very recent. Irujo (1993, pp.205-6) believes that students typically avoid using idioms because they are worried about making a mistake and this arises through the difficulty of transferring the idiom from the first language to the second language. There is also a perception among students that idioms are specific to a particular language rather than generally applicable. "Simplified foreigner talk" is also a point to mention as it is often how a native speaker talks to a non-native speaker, compounded by the fact that non-native speakers ascribe a special place to the idioms. They "frame" them, perhaps explaining that they are using one as a figure of speech – ostensibly in case of making a mistake. Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) cited in Irujo (1993, p.206) found that idioms are not totally avoided as a category, but phrasal verbs definitely were. So, very similar idiomatic forms are avoided. Irujo later went on to find that given the choice, learners would opt for a non-idiomatic phrase over an idiomatic one even if they attempted to use them.

## **6. Idioms and Culture**

Cultural specificity causes difficulties in recognizing and interpreting idioms. According to Bouarroudj (2010) who cites the Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, idioms are a form of expression unique to a certain language. This means that they can only be related to one language or culture. So, associated with a language is also the concept of its social structure and other factors and as an example the expression "blue blood" was coined by the Moors who observed the Spanish people with paler skin and their veins appearing to be blue. This denoted by Kavka (2003:31) in later years. Another example comes from English where someone may "go to the bar to drown their sorrows" but there is no equivalent in Arabic. There are further many expressions in English involving the word 'dog' for example, "a dog's life", "to rain cats and dogs" and so on, but as dogs are of little import in Arabic culture there exist no counterparts. Thus, each culture influences the lexical items and hence how they organize their ideas about the world. It is therefore necessary to have cultural knowledge in order to better process idioms. Ponterotto (1994:3) talks about the need to understand culture before trying to understand metaphors.

Therefore, we could say that learning idioms could be as interesting as learning about the target culture, and it is equally about learning the language as well as the culture. While learning another language is not easy, because we have to learn about grammatical patterns, new vocabulary, pronunciation and so on, we also have to understand that some groups of words have to be used in combination even if they appear ungrammatical or strange – these are idioms. It is definitely the case that idioms are of prime importance in language learning and in the language classroom as well as for teacher training seminars. Teachers should ideally have special training to teach them, and should have a degree of understanding about how idioms are processed, acquired and the means learners use to get them. All this requires effort and greater visibility.

## **7. Idiomatic Competence as a Source of Knowledge**

The area of idiomatic or figurative competence has latterly been linked to communicative competence in the Chomsky (1965) and Hymes (1972) schools together with Canale and Swain (1980) and Celce-Murcia (1995, 2008). However, Celce-Murcia (2008) proposed a revised model of communicative competence whereby formulaic competence also includes something called idiomatic competence which is the source of knowledge. This means that the speaker has the ability to act as both addressee and addressor when using idioms and as such would be an extension of formulaic competence whereby users can employ fixed chunks or stretches of language. It draws on Buckingham (2006) and Burke (1988). Thus, there is a full decoding of a particular conversation.

Interestingly, Knowles (2004) analyzed the learning process as consisting of five steps. These are: familiarization, recognition, comprehension, master and automaticity. Having achieved this final level a learner could be said to have mastered communicative competence in the target language at an appropriate level. This latter stage is often reached through exposure to the target language as well as practicing various phrases. Thus, the implication is that idiomatic use should be encouraged in learners along with intensive practice.

## **8. Procedure, Data Collection and Limits of the study:**

Two tests were prepared (adopted from Tran (2013) with some modifications) to achieve the objectives of the research. The first was to assess the linguistic knowledge about idioms and the second to assess the proficiency of using them. Six universities from Kurdistan Region of Iraq (three private and three governmental) were chosen to be involved in the research questionnaires. Thirty participants were randomly chosen of fourth year male and female students in the departments of English from each university studying in the second semester to take the tests. The study was initiated after taking the permission and consent of the concerned universities. They were given one hour to complete the tests. The researcher and the teacher supervised the whole process and collected the papers. Later, the answers were checked and the statistics were given in forms of tables using the percentage rates.

The present study was limited to six universities from Kurdistan region- Iraq (Halabja, Lebanese- French, Salahaddin, Soran, Cihan/Erbil, and Human Development). It was also limited to the students of fourth year in the departments of English and Translation.

## **9. Findings**

Table 1 below shows the total scores for the students of the six universities involved in the idiomatic knowledge test. The results show that the highest score is achieved by the University of Human Development students (53%) and the lowest score is achieved by Halabja University students (26%).

**Table 1: Universities total score for the idiomatic knowledge test**

Universities	percentage
Lebanese French University	33%
Salahaddin University	34%
Soran University	46%
Cihan University	44%
University of Human Development	53%
Halabja University	26%
Total average	39%

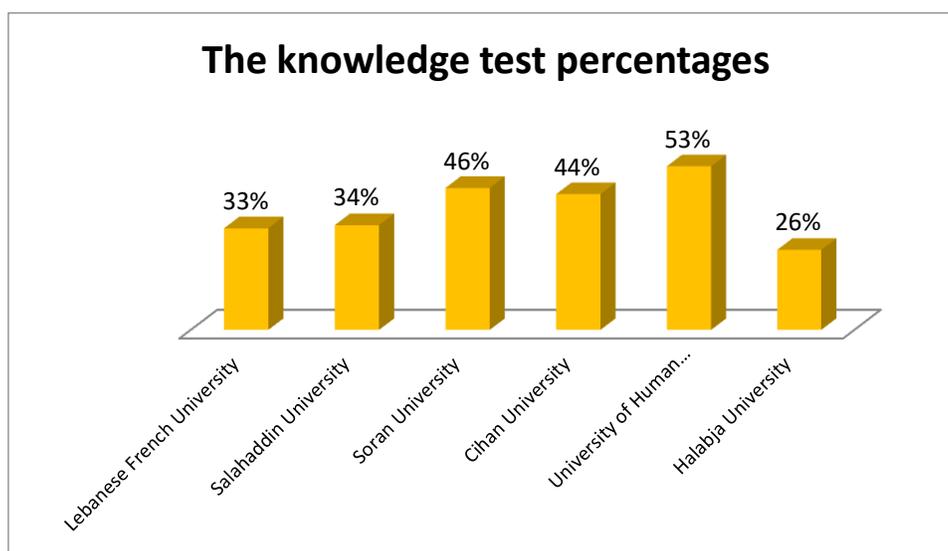
**Figure 1: The Knowledge Test Percentages**

Figure 1 illustrates the percentages of the correct answers of the knowledge test of students from six universities from Kurdistan Region- Iraq. The average of correct answers ranges from 26% to 53%. The average (the mean) of the correct answers of all universities is 39%.

Table 2 below shows the total scores for the students of the six universities involved in the **idiomatic Proficiency** test. Again, the results show that the highest score is achieved by the University of Human Development students (28,44%) and the lowest score is achieved by Salahaddin University students (3.17%).

**Table 2: Universities total score for the idiomatic Proficiency test**

Universities	percentages
Lebanese French University	3.33%
Salahaddin University	3.17%
Soran University	8.33%
Cihan University	9.33%
University of Human Development	28.44%
Halabja University	6.67%
Total average	9.83%

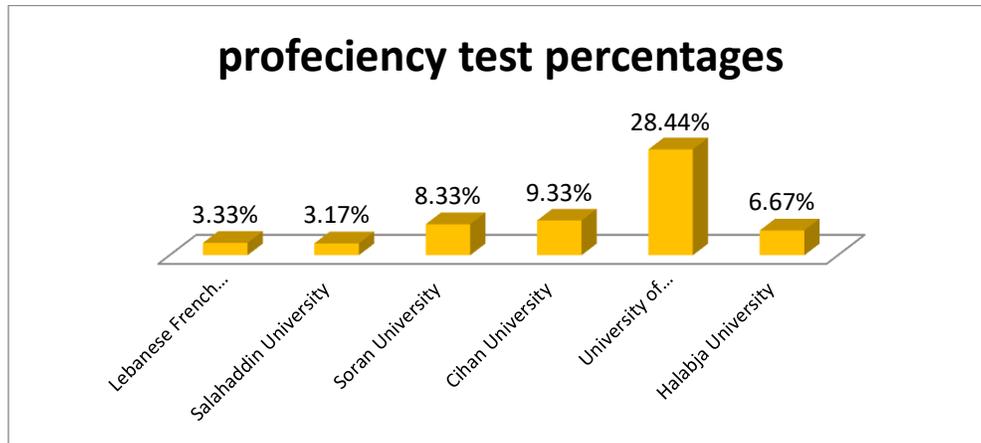


Figure 2: Proficiency Test Percentages

Figure 2 shows the percentages of the correct answers of the idiomatic proficiency test of students from six different universities in Kurdistan Region- Iraq. The range of the correct answers of the proficiency test is between 3.17% and 9.33% and the average of all the universities is (9.83 %).

Table 3 below shows the averages of the correct answers of the two tests:

Table 3: The total average of the correct answers for both tests	
The Knowledge Test Percentages	39%
Proficiency Test Percentages	9.83%

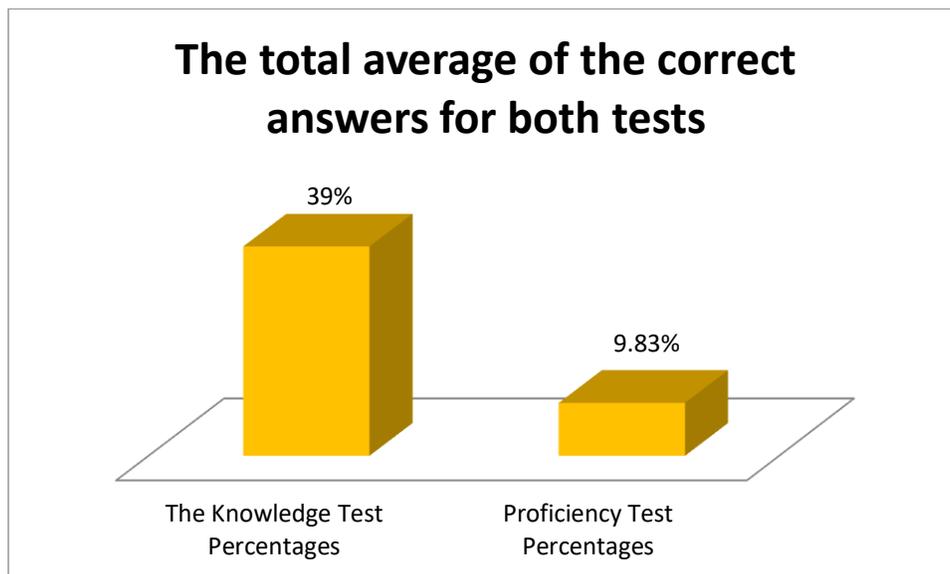


Figure 3: The total average of the correct answers for both tests

Figure 3 demonstrates the result of the total average of the correct answers for both Proficiency test and Knowledge test, considering the result of the above figure, it can be shown that the result of the Knowledge test is higher with 39% rate of

correct answers for all 25 questions, on the other hand, the result for proficiency is much lower with 9.83% for correct answers for all 15 questions.

## 10. Discussion and Conclusions

The present study is set out to explore the relationship between knowledge about idioms and idiomatic proficiency. Bearing these goals in mind, two surveys have been set to obtain authentic answers in the questionnaire survey. The relationship found was statistically important and did create a definite impact on the two constructs in question.

The subsequent data supported the thesis in establishing the relationship and also gave evidence of where to go in future studies. It is concluded that the increasing correlation pattern between the constructs provides very interesting information about the amount of knowledge and proficiency the students have concerning idioms. The data suggest that idioms recognition and use are highly correlated, even though the data show wide inconsistency in the individual responses. What this means is that the relationship between idiomatic knowledge and proficiency definitely exists, but as this was only an observational study, it is still unknown how strongly each of the variables influences the other. The increasing correlation between the two parts of the test is somewhat to be expected as idiom usage. While the relation between idiomatic knowledge and language proficiency is promising, the wide spread data points indicate a wide variability on an individual level.

The gap in the results from the survey, "25 Idioms" indicates that some of the students' exposure to idioms does not reflect their level of English. Thus, it is entirely possible that someone who has low level of English will know many idioms, and someone who has high level of English knows very few.

Even more possibilities open up if we look at different types of learners. Some people are heritage learners; some are visual, tactile, passive or active learners. Some people have learned a language through fascination and some have never left their country of origin and still speak competently, at least in academic registers and professional registers.

These factors may create a great deal of difference in how they process and deal with idioms they face. Such discrepancy comes from the methods that people use when learning English. Students who concentrate on an academic approach with classes, teachers, and standard materials will likely have much less exposure to idioms due to their goal of learning; primarily a purpose of communication in the lower registers between friends, family, and other close relationships. Other students who place a great weight on pop culture, movies, books, internet, and other materials are likely to have a much greater exposure to idioms or at least the culture of the target language. Consequently, the variation in the idiomatic knowledge can fluctuate greatly. However, subjective evidence suggests that the regular process of language learning does not entail an abundance of exposure to the target language's idioms or culture on the whole.

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2. After discussing the topic back and forth for one week the parties could finally announce that they *see eye to eye* and that they had found a solution. What does it mean to “**see eye to eye**”?
- To find a compromise
  - To be an eyewitness
  - To agree about something with someone else
  - To be able to look at each other, even if you do not agree with that person or persons
3. He was quite certain that he would not be in trouble when the police came. He had done everything *by the book*. What is the meaning of the expression “**by the book**”?
- To do all your work by the book shelf
  - To follow the rules exactly
  - To do exactly what your employer has told you.
  - When a movie is based on a book.
4. “Why such a *long face*”? “My grandma died yesterday”. “I’m so sorry for your loss”. What does it mean to have a “**long face**”?
- To look serious
  - To look tired
  - To have a swollen face
  - To look sad
5. I’m afraid my parents will *hit the roof* when I tell them that I crashed their car. What does it mean to “**hit the roof**”?
- To suddenly become very angry
  - To become extremely disappointed
  - To get hurt and sad
  - To celebrate
6. Mark and Steve were fighting about which *blockbuster* to bring home and watch: “Sky fall” or “The Dark Knight Rises”? What is the meaning of the expression “**blockbuster**”?
- A new rabbit on the block
  - Movies that will blow the viewer’s mind
  - High explosives
  - Something which sustains widespread popularity and achieves enormous sales
7. A number of shops had to close down after a multinational retail corporation offered to pay a significantly higher price for the lease on the building. I was not surprised. After all, we do live in a world where *money talks*. What is the meaning of the expression “**money talks**”?
- There is no hope for the average
  - Money gives one power and influence to get one's own way
  - Injustice rules
  - Price is more important than variation
8. Yesterday I found six steps for how to stop being a *couch potato* on Wiki how. The first step was to unplug the television. What does it mean to be a “**couch potato**”?
- A person who is unemployed and has nothing to do.
  - A person who spends much time sitting or lying down, usually watching television
  - A person who likes to eat his dinner while he or she watches television
  - A person who has to eat chips while watching television.
9. When Peter tweeted that he would *throw in the towel* and start doing something else with his life, a whole world protested. What does it mean to “**throw in the towel**”?
- To quit
  - To dislike your job
  - To stop throwing sweaty towels to fans
  - To make a drastic change

10. Susan was reaching for the jar on the top shelf but she was not tall enough. She asked a man passing her in the aisle if he could *give her a hand*. What does it mean to “**give someone a hand**”?

- a. To be a gentleman
- b. To be a hand donor
- c. To help someone
- d. To reach for things placed high

11. Lenny asked Mark if he had plans for the night. Mark answered that he didn't have anything special planned. “Then we can *hang out* tonight,” Lenny said. What does it mean to “**hang out**”?

- a. To exercise by hanging upside down in a tree doing crunches
- b. To spend time aimlessly
- c. To be with your friends outside
- d. To chat with your friends on Google+

12. I woke up this morning to my neighbor singing “My heart will go on” *at the top of his lungs*. What is the meaning of the expression “**at the top of one's lungs**”?

- a. To have a wish to annoy someone
- b. To breathe in a controlled matter
- c. As loudly as one's voice will allow
- d. As out of tune as possible

13. You should have seen this guy at the theater yesterday. He totally *lost it* when someone cut in line and got the last ticket. What does it mean to “**lose it**”?

- a. To lose track of time
- b. To get angry
- c. To get really disappointed
- d. To lose the thing you want

14. I wouldn't say that you're 100% correct, but you are definitely *on the right track*. What does it mean to be “**on the right track**”?

- a. A nice way to say that someone is wrong
- b. To tell someone what they want to hear
- c. That you have finally found the right song on a CD
- d. To follow the right set of assumptions

15. When the owner of the bar found out that a 14- year- old was in his bar he told the kid to *beat it*. What is the meaning of the expression “**beat it**”?

- a. To go to bed
- b. To sit down
- c. To go away immediately
- d. To hit the table so that someone would come and serve him

16. It *crossed my mind* when I read the article about the fireman who rescued five people – my purpose in life is to be a fireman. What is the meaning of the expression to “**cross someone's mind**”?

- a. To suddenly think of something
- b. To think about something for a short time
- c. To feel like God has marked you and given you a calling
- d. To wish you were brave

17. She was a *cold-hearted* old lady. At least that was what the neighborhood kids thought after she killed Joe's cat with a shovel. They had not seen that the cat had been hit by a car. What does it mean to be "**cold-hearted**"?
- To be devoid of feeling
  - To be mean
  - To be crazy
  - To be angry at life
18. "Are you *good to go*?" Jo asked. Almost, I just have to get my keys! What does it mean to be "**good to go**"?
- Make sure that everything that needs to be remembered is remembered
  - To be organized
  - Very skilled at walking
  - To be ready to go
19. She told her parents that she was pregnant, but she was only *pulling their leg*. What does it mean to "**pull someone's leg**"?
- To pull somebody by the leg to attract their attention
  - To trick someone
  - To lie to someone
  - To see how far one can go with jokes before it is not acceptable
20. They all thought the match would be *a piece of cake* but they were wrong. The other team was faster. What is the meaning of the expression "**piece of cake**"?
- To be satisfactory
  - The reward you get for winning
  - To be easy to do
  - To think that the victory is won before the match has started
21. I was shocked when I got the news! I felt as *fit as a fiddle* until the doctor showed me the negative results. What does it mean to be "**fit as a fiddle**"?
- To feel secure
  - To be strong
  - To be in very good health
  - To be positive
22. As Nicole made her way to the stage co-actors and actresses quietly told her to *break a leg*. What does it mean to "**break a leg**"?
- Good luck
  - You'll do great
  - To give a performance the audience will not forget
  - To express that you are jealous for not getting the lead role
23. She has the book *at her fingertips*. If you wonder where to find the information she would be the one to ask. What does it mean to have something "**at one's fingertips**"?
- To have something in your hand
  - A few coins that you grab between your fingertips
  - To have quick access
  - To be well prepared and in control
24. He is always complaining about the expensive gas in this country, but as drivers, we're all in *the same boat*. What does it mean to be "**in the same boat**"?

- a. To have to pay the same price
- b. To accept having to rely on expensive gas
- c. To agree but not complaining
- d. To be in the same situation as other people

25. It is always good to be a little nervous when driving, because it *keeps you at your toes*. What does it mean to “**keep someone at one’s toes**”?

- a. To respect the things that might be dangerous
- b. To stay calm and careful
- c. When a girl stands on her father’s feet while dancing
- d. Readily available.

**Appendix 2 . Use the following idioms in their correct situations.**

- A. flesh and blood
- B. have a ball
- C. make yourself at home
- D. under the weather
- E. hit the sack
- F. know-it-all
- G. paint a picture
- H. a long face
- I. odds and ends
- J. go all out
- K. make ends meet
- L. call it a day
- M. lift a finger
- N. your heart sinks / sank
- O. drop me a line

1. N. your heart sinks / sank when I opened the letter and realized I had not been accepted into graduate school.

2. Little Mikey had H. a long face when he was told he couldn’t go outside to play

3. I’m so tired that the only thing I want to do is take a shower and E. hit the sack

4. This weekend I stayed at home and did some I. odds and ends around the house.

5. Look, it’s already 4:30. Time to L. call it a day

6. Thanks so much for inviting us to the party. We really B. have a ball

7. Why don’t you G. paint a picture some time to let me know how you’re going?

8. All of our A. flesh and blood came to the big family reunion.

9. I’m glad you could come. Please C. make yourself at home

10. Jane’s head and neck hurt, and her nose is stuffy. She must be D. under the weather

11. Every month we have to plan our budget carefully in order to K. make ends meet

12. No one listens to Greg at meetings because he always acts like such a F. know-it-all

13. The nation’s leading economist O. drop me a line about continued growth in the automobile industry.

14. No one will complain if you J. go all out but still don’t succeed.

15. Mrs. Waters is upset with her husband because he doesn’t M. lift a finger to help with chores around the house on the weekend. He just watches sports programs on TV.